



Town of Mesilla, New Mexico

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
TOWN OF MESILLA
WORKSESSION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2014
4:00 P.M.**

TRUSTEES: Nora L. Barraza, Mayor
Carlos Arzabal, Mayor Pro Tem
Sam Bernal, Trustee
Linda L. Flores, Trustee
Stephanie Johnson-Burick, Trustee

STAFF: Cynthia Stoechner-Hernandez, Town Clerk/Treasurer
Kevin Hoban, Fire Chief
Debbie Lujan, Public Works Director
Chris Mangusing, Town Marshal
Gloria Maya, Recorder

1. Discussion on preliminary 2014-2015 Budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal asked by Mayor Barraza to start the worksession. Reviewed the trustee's prior concerns regarding the budget.

Ms. Stoechner- Hernandez responded Mr. Cervantes fees are at \$35K; \$40K was budgeted.

Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal stated the board would like monthly itemized statements to keep abreast of the fees.

Trustee Bernal stated the Department Heads have a responsibility to watch their budgets; we need to see the attorney fees quarterly to understand where we are at.

Trustee Flores agrees it needs to be at least quarterly.

Trustee Johnson-Burick asked what happened in 2008 and 2009 with the attorney fees.

Fire Chief Hoban indicated the attorney fees were related to the annexation as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal reviewed the breakdown of the different COLA percentages.

Trustee Flores stated we just lost a \$23K grant in the Marshal's Department. If we missed a deadline; she does not see success there. She appreciates the Marshal is trying but this is our fault.

Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal stated this is the Law Enforcement Fund.

Trustee Johnson-Burick stated she also asked Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez to break it down by the different pay scales.

1
2 Trustee Flores asked if both of these scales are off by the health insurance. The point of doing this is to
3 know what it is going to cost the town.
4

5 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez responded the health insurance benefits are not factored in. We are looking at
6 around \$20K.
7

8 Trustee Flores stated she would like to see those numbers.
9

10 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez stated we are paying 90/10 for employees with five years or more and 80/20 for
11 the other employees. She indicated it would run from \$15K to \$20K for insurance.
12

13 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal stated the lowest paid employees are looking at \$3 to \$4 a paycheck. There
14 needs to be a medium and try to help them. He recommends not looking at any percentage below 2%.
15

16 Trustee Bernal stated he is looking at a 5% COLA.
17

18 Trustee Johnson-Burick stated she is okay at knocking off the 1%. COLA is not designed to look at
19 additional duties assigned or to accommodate insurance increases. She feels we will need to pay for the
20 Marshal's certification.
21

22 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez indicated those will be paid from this year's budget.
23

24 Marshal Mangusing stated he has passed the first portion, the second portion is the drug screen, a
25 psychological, at the end of the week his medical and has contract with the county to do his finger
26 printing. His goal is to be part of the class that will be held in July.
27

28 Trustee Flores asked when the class will be started.
29

30 Marshal Mangusing responded the class starts July 27th. He is holding a Community Outreach on May
31 28th at the Community Center where he will inform the public.
32

33 Mayor Pro Tem
34

35 Fire Chief Hoban indicated the employees had to pay 25% this fiscal year without a COLA which should
36 be considered.
37

38 Trustee Johnson-Burick responded she understands but the board is responsible for the finances of the
39 town.
40

41 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal stated the 1% is off the table. His recommendation is a 5% for hourly and 3%
42 for salaried.
43

44 Trustee Flores stated we do not have a reference to look at. The hourly employees do not make that much
45 money so looking at the 2.5% we will not be that far off. She is uncomfortable not knowing the numbers
46 we need to consider.
47

48 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal stated we are not going to know those numbers.
49

50 Trustee Johnson-Burick asked if we want to give Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez a few more options that will
51 include the insurance.
52

53 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez stated she will have to redo the whole budget.

1 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal asked if we want Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez to go with the 2.5% or 3% for
2 salaried and 4% or 5% for hourly plus insurance fees. In his opinion we should not look at anything
3 lower than a 5% for hourly employees or we could give those employees earning \$8 or \$9 a \$1 increase.
4

5 Trustee Johnson-Burick stated not all hourly employees are in the \$9-\$13 range and that is why she
6 proposed the percentages she did. She will support 5% for the \$8 to \$9 employees.
7

8 Mayor Pro Tem reviewed employees that would receive the 5% COLA and the ones that would receive a
9 4% COLA. These are still hourly and not salaried.
10

11 Trustee Johnson-Burick reiterated they are eligible for overtime.
12

13 Mayor Barraza arrived at 4:38 p.m.
14

15 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal filled in the Mayor on what was being discussed and his recommendations.
16

17 Mayor Barraza stated the board is considering going for different ranges instead of going straight across
18 the board. She asked Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez to review the budget from the beginning.
19

20 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez reviewed the budget.
21

22 Mayor Barraza asked if the City of Las Cruces passes the minimum wage ordinance will it affect the
23 Town of Mesilla and is the county proposing the increase.
24

25 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez responded the Town of Mesilla will not be affected. The state as well as the
26 federal government is considering raising the minimum wage.
27

28 Mayor Barraza stated the state is proposing \$10.10 and we will have to comply if passed.
29

30 Trustee Flores asked if that is passed will the town have enough to comply and give the COLA increase.
31

32 Mayor Barraza stated if the 5% COLA is passed we would not be too far from the proposed minimum
33 wage increase.
34

35 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez responded this will probably take place next fiscal year.
36

37 Mayor Barraza stated she read in the newspaper on what is happening in Las Cruces with regards on the
38 efforts of living in Las Cruces.
39

40 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal stated he does not need someone to read the packet to him. He would like to
41 come up with a consensus on what COLA we would like to give.
42

43 Mayor Barraza stated they were just reviewed the information requested by the trustees.
44

45 Trustee Bernal stated the guidance the mayor gave the Department Heads four years ago has worked. The
46 former mayor stole from Paul to give to Peter. Moral was horrible during the furlough. We are working
47 as a team. Six years ago we were in the red; nothing to give anyone anything. . Now that we had an
48 increase in property tax we are starting to get better. Insurance goes up every year and employees
49 received a stipend in 2012 his heart goes out to them. He feels confident that we do have something to
50 help the employees. The Department Heads have gone through a lot and put forth effort to seek funding
51 for projects. He asked the board to take this into consideration; we cannot go backwards. He sees the
52 town going forward even with the 5%; trustees, put yourself in their shoes.
53

1 Trustee Johnson-Burick responded she concurs that we cannot go backwards and that is why she is being
2 conservative in her requests and suggestions.
3
4 Trustee Flores stated she would like to give a 5% across the board. She asked if the COLA can be looked
5 at after a certain time if things get better so that we can add percentage to the salaries.
6
7 Trustee Johnson-Burick stated the City of Las Cruces is starting at 2% and if Gross Receipt Taxes come
8 in they will look at increasing it 1.5% more.
9
10 Trustee Flores stated she last thing she would want to do is give something and then take it away.
11
12 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal stated we are all going in different directions with regard to the budget.
13 Reiterated his recommendations.
14
15 Trustee Bernal recommended going with the 5% for hourly and 3% for salaried. The increase for
16 salaried employees can be revisited in three to four months.
17
18 Trustee Johnson-Burick stated she would support a couple of options but she will not support
19 guaranteeing an increase in mid-year.
20
21 Trustee Bernal stated he is not guaranteeing an increase as it would depend on the budget. This is what
22 Trustee Johnson-Burick said the City of Las Cruces is doing their budget.
23
24 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal stated there is a lot of time and effort that goes into preparing the budget. We
25 are the Board of Finance so there is nothing wrong with asking questions. He stated he would go with the
26 4% for employees above the \$9 an hour wage.
27
28 Trustee Flores asked if Deputy Shepan is included.
29
30 Mayor Barraza responded he is included but we will need to the Las Cruces Public Schools to ask for an
31 increase in the funding for the SRO which will need to be approved the Board of Education. We cannot
32 exclude Deputy Shepan. She would like to go with the 5% for all hourly employees and if the board is
33 adamant that the Department Heads are not to receive a 5% she would go with the 3%.
34
35 Trustee Johnson-Burick stated she would agree to the 5% for employee's earning \$9 and below; 4% for
36 hourly employees earning over \$9 and 3% for salaried employees.
37
38 Trustee Flores stated she agrees to those percentages.
39
40 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal stated the federal government is going to dictate the minimum wage which will
41 take a toll on the town but if we give a 5% at this time we will not be hit so hard. We need to be
42 proactive.
43
44 Mayor Barraza agrees eventually we need to catch up so it is better to do it gradually. If we do not have
45 the money at that time we will have to do a reduction in force.
46
47 Trustee Johnson-Burick stated that is why we need to be fiscally responsible
48
49 Mayor Barraza responded we are being fiscally responsible; our records speak for itself. We inherited
50 something that was not pleasant and we have been able to move forward as a team. We have been
51 conservative in our projections and still meet the needs of our residents.
52

1 Trustee Johnson-Burick asked if she is confident in saying when the well went out and we had to look for
2 money.
3
4 Mayor Barraza responded we did not have to look for money we had money in our reserves to address the
5 issue. We did not dig into anyone's budget. The reserve is continuing to build to address emergencies
6 and the needs of our residents.
7
8 Trustee Flores stated with the new proposal of a 5%, 4% and 3% COLA increase will be lower than the
9 5% across the board. She asked if we can afford \$70K in additional cost.
10
11 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez stated the budget reflects the 5%.
12
13 Mayor Barraza stated there is not a significant amount that would impact the budget.
14
15 Trustee Johnson-Burick stated she will support the 3%, 4% and 5% COLA increase.
16
17 Mayor Pro Tem stated there is a \$6K difference.
18
19 Mayor Barraza stated we are taking into account the modifier which is saving us money.
20
21 Fire Chief Hoban stated the employees are being safer.
22
23 Mayor Barraza responded that is true but the Fire Chief does a good job guiding the employees.
24
25 Fire Chief Hoban stated the recognition belongs to every employee.
26
27 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez stated the Active Shooter class will be held next Tuesday.
28
29 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal asked if the trustees open to 5%, 5% and 3%.
30
31 Trustee Johnson-Burick responded she is not in support of that.
32
33 Trustee Bernal responded he would support that.
34
35 Trustee Flores concurs with the 4% and will consider the 5% across the board when she sees the numbers.
36
37 Mayor Barraza stated \$6K is not that much. All the departments can look into their budget to give the 5%
38 across the board. Employee's morale is low because they feel the trustees do not support them. They go
39 beyond the call of duty and are committed to the town. Employees are stressed; everyone has sacrificed.
40 She wouldn't have proposed this if she felt the town could not afford it. We have looked at these
41 numbers. She reiterated she would not have proposed this if she was not confident. Let's reward them
42 for what they give back to the town; why can't we do that.
43
44 Trustee Johnson-Burick stated this is a Cost of Living; this is not to reward them for additional duties-that
45 is where bonuses come in.
46
47 Mayor Barraza responded we do not give bonuses.
48
49 Trustee Johnson-Burick responded that maybe something we need to look at. Reiterated this is a Cost of
50 Living it is not to make promises.
51

1 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal responded the Cost of Living has gone up; everything else has gone up. We are
2 the Board of Finance, when we vote against the budget we vote against us. We need to get this done by
3 May 30th.

4
5 Trustee Johnson-Burick stated the compensation is going to add to the total.

6
7 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal stated we need to be trustworthy of the jobs that we are doing. Department of
8 Finance will be calling the Mayor and the Town Clerk.

9
10 Mayor Barraza stated all we have given are COLA since 2006. We are not voting; this is only a
11 worksession. She would like to give Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez as to what to do. There is currently a 2-2
12 situation. The lower hourly paid employees will be at 5%; 4% for other hourly employees and 3% for
13 salaried.

14
15 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal asked if we can look at the Department Heads every month.

16
17 Trustee Flores stated since we did not give anyone anything, their salaries went down.

18
19 Mayor Barraza stated we are in consensus at looking at the Department Heads in three months.

20
21 Trustee Flores indicated we can also look at the employees that will receive the 4% once we make sure
22 the money is there.

23
24 Mayor Barraza asked if the officers have more taken out for insurances than other employees.

25
26 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez responded they have more taken out for PERA not for insurance.

27
28 Mayor Barraza asked if the 5% increase would help balance it out.

29
30 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez responded yes.

31
32 Trustee Johnson-Burick reiterated she supports 5%, 4% and 3%.

33
34 Trustee Flores stated she supports 5%, 4% and 3% Inaudible

35
36 Mayor Barraza stated she supports a 5% across the board and that way we would not have to come up
37 with money in the middle of the year. The \$6K is not a big difference and will already be budgeted. The
38 Department Heads would decrease their budget to give the middle group a 5% COLA.

39
40 Trustee Flores stated she believes it is more than \$6K.

41
42 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal asked if a budget adjustment can be made.

43
44 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez stated when there is an increase or decrease to the budget board approval is
45 needed and it is then sent to Department of Finance for their approval. The changes are then entered into
46 the system.

47
48 Mayor Barraza stated we are not going to decrease our revenue. If we take away the 2% for the
49 Department Heads our expenditures will decrease which will be okay with Department Head. This will
50 still be in the budget if we add an increase to the Department Heads in mid-year.

51
52 Trustee Flores inaudible

53

1 Mayor Barraza stated whatever is left over will go into the reserves.
2
3 Trustee Flores asked if the Department Heads have a problem with cutting their budget.
4
5 Mayor Barraza stated it will be in salaries. The current budget shows a 5% across the board; the 2%
6 decrease will be in personnel that they do not touch. She is proposing 5%, 5%, 3%.
7
8 Ms. Maya indicated if Department Heads are given the 2% in mid-year, the 2% will be based on what
9 they were earning during the fiscal year 2013-2014 not what they are earning at the time of review. She
10 asked Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez to bring forward a 5%, 5%, 3% COLA increase in the proposed budget.
11
12 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal stated a vote has not been taken.
13
14 Mayor Barraza stated she was giving direction to Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez due to the conversation
15 discussed today.
16
17 Trustee Johnson-Burick asked why both proposal be brought to the next meeting since a vote has not been
18 taken. She would like those numbers for the 5%, 4% and 3% with the insurance factored in.
19
20 Mayor Barraza asked Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez that reflects the 5%, 5%, 3% and a separate sheet that
21 reflects the 5%, 4% and 3% with the insurance factored in.
22
23 Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez stated the HIDTA budget will be added to the town's budget.
24
25 Mayor Pro Tem Arzabal asked if the board can get those figures in the next two day so that they can
26 review it over the weekend.
27
28 Marshal Mangusing stated he will give an update on the Law Enforcement Fund.
29
30 Trustee Flores asked if Judge Frieze can have an opportunity to explain his request.
31
32 Judge Frieze distributed literature to the board that addressed the items that came up at the last meeting.
33
34 Mayor Barraza stated this can be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting. She did look at the
35 timesheets and sees where the clerk works 4 hours on Fridays which is not a 40 hour week.
36
37 Judge Frieze responded Ms. Carbajal is working 36 hours a week. Trustee Bernal indicated at the last
38 meeting he could not swallow the two weeks off at Christmas. During the two weeks the town employees
39 get four days off. Trustee Bernal stated it is unfair to other town employees. The holidays were passed
40 by the trustees. Winter Holiday was on Tuesday and Wednesday; the town hall was closed. We could
41 stay open but if something went missing you would be harping on us. New Year's was also on a Tuesday
42 and Wednesday; town employees were given off. It was unfair for Trustee Bernal to make the comment
43 that it was hard to swallow.
44
45 Trustee Bernal stated that the judge did not explain himself as to why they were out.
46
47 Judge Frieze responded they did not ask.
48
49 Trustee Bernal responded yes we did ask.
50
51 Judge Frieze responded you hit me.....
52

1 Trustee Bernal stated you remember what you want to remember. It is not fair to the other employees.
2 The mayor will let them go if their work is caught up. The judge said they were caught up and he gave
3 his employees two week off. .
4

5 Judge Frieze stated our office was closed; town employees were off four days.
6

7 Mayor Barraza stated the court observes the same holidays as the town.
8

9 Judge Frieze responded yes the court does.
10

11 Mayor Barraza stated the court observes the town's holidays plus gives his employees additional time off.
12

13 Judge Frieze stated staff was on call and did need to come in two days.
14

15 Mayor Barraza asked if the clerks get compensated for coming in during their time off.
16

17 Judge Frieze stated there was a finding and holding by the Supreme Court regarding separation of power.
18 He asked them to look at page 3-Holdings. He read paragraph D from literature. The court has just added
19 another mandate to the court where an interpreter must be provided if it is a Spanish trial. Ms. Carbajal
20 will be taking the course which is paid by Judicial Education; the court will be closed during this course
21 and when there is a trial that needs an interpreter. This is the reason to have a part-time employee so that
22 the customers can be taken care of. They are the ones that bring money into the town.
23

24 Mayor Barraza asked how often have has there been a need for an interpreter in his years of court.
25

26 Judge Frieze responded he does not recall. When he first took office there was a lady who was brought
27 in for a parking citation. The judge had a sign language interpreter came in for \$180 for a \$10 citation.
28 We have add four individuals and he was able to get Ms. Carbajal to assist since the office was covered.
29 That was before it was mandated now it is mandated. State Statute 35.14.11 and 66.01.30 were amended
30 with a population of 3K or less, that had a balance in the Correction Fund to be taken out. He was told by
31 Mr. Eckert that the town was going to take out that balance. We cannot operate that way because if the
32 court sends someone to rehabilitation the court must pay the fees.
33

34 Trustee Flores asked if the part-time clerk was taken out of the proposed budget.
35

36 Mayor Barraza responded yes it was.
37

38 Trustee Flores asked if we could budget for someone when needed.
39

40 Judge Frieze responded schedules are flexible which makes it difficult. His requests is for a 25 hour
41 part-time clerk.
42

43 Mayor Barraza stated since we are budgeting the clerk for 40 hours and only works 36 hours we may be
44 able to compensate her when she does translating.
45

46 Trustee Flores stated he wants another person there since it is impossible for Ms. Carbajal to be in two
47 places at once. She asked if it is possible for an alternate clerk to come in as needed.
48

49 Judge Frieze stated that is not possible; people are not going to sit by the phone. We had a full-time and
50 a part-time clerk for years until the economy hit bottom. During that time several board members and
51 himself, which he did to preserve his court clerk, took a pay cut. Please call do not hesitate to contact
52 him.
53

1 Mayor Barraza stated Ms. Stoechner-Hernandez will get the information to the trustees for review.

2
3 **Worksession ended at 5:47 p.m.**

4
5 **APPROVED THIS 9TH DAY OF JUNE, 2014.**

6
7
8
9
10 _____
11 Nora L. Barraza
12 Mayor

13
14 **ATTEST:**

15
16
17
18
19 _____
20 Cynthia Stoechner-Hernandez
21 Town Clerk/Treasurer